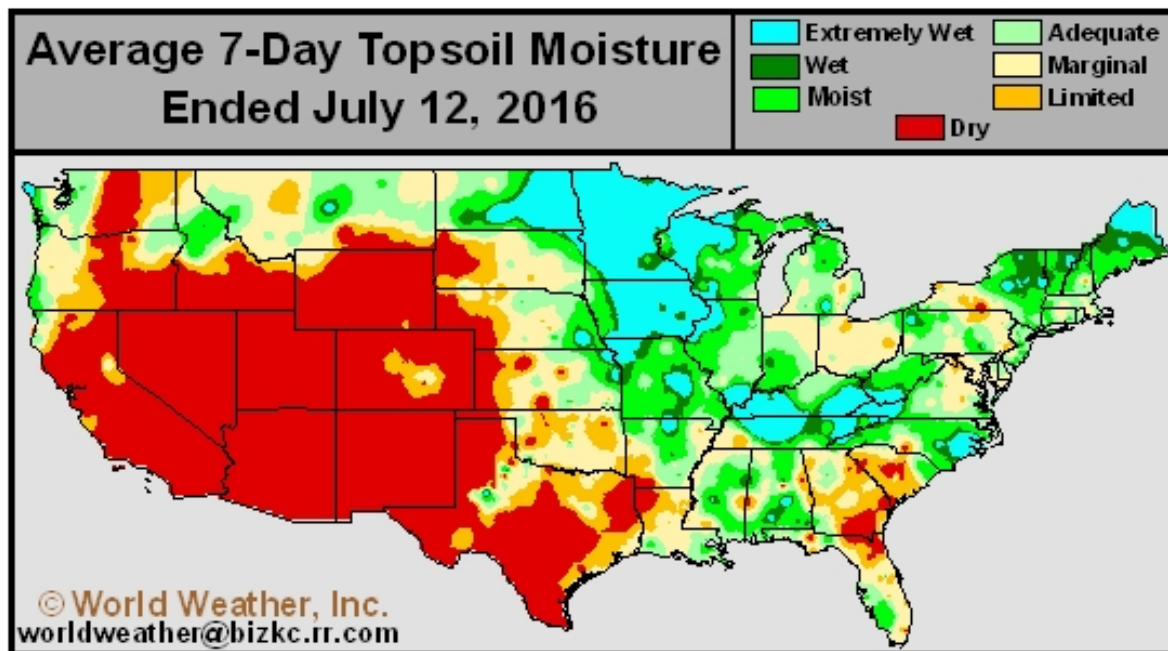


# U.S. High Pressure Ridge Has Ruffles

By Drew Lerner

Kansas City, July 12 (World Weather Inc.) – Despite the opinions of some weather forecasters conditions in the U.S. Midwest so far this summer have been almost ideal from a corn and soybean development perspective. Here we sit in mid-July and find soil moisture at favorable levels with much of the corn crop pollinating successfully. There is enough subsoil moisture in much of the Midwest to carry crops for a couple of weeks of weather adversity and it would appear that the moisture reserve will come in handy as a high pressure ridge settles over the production region. This high pressure system aloft will prove to have “ruffles”.



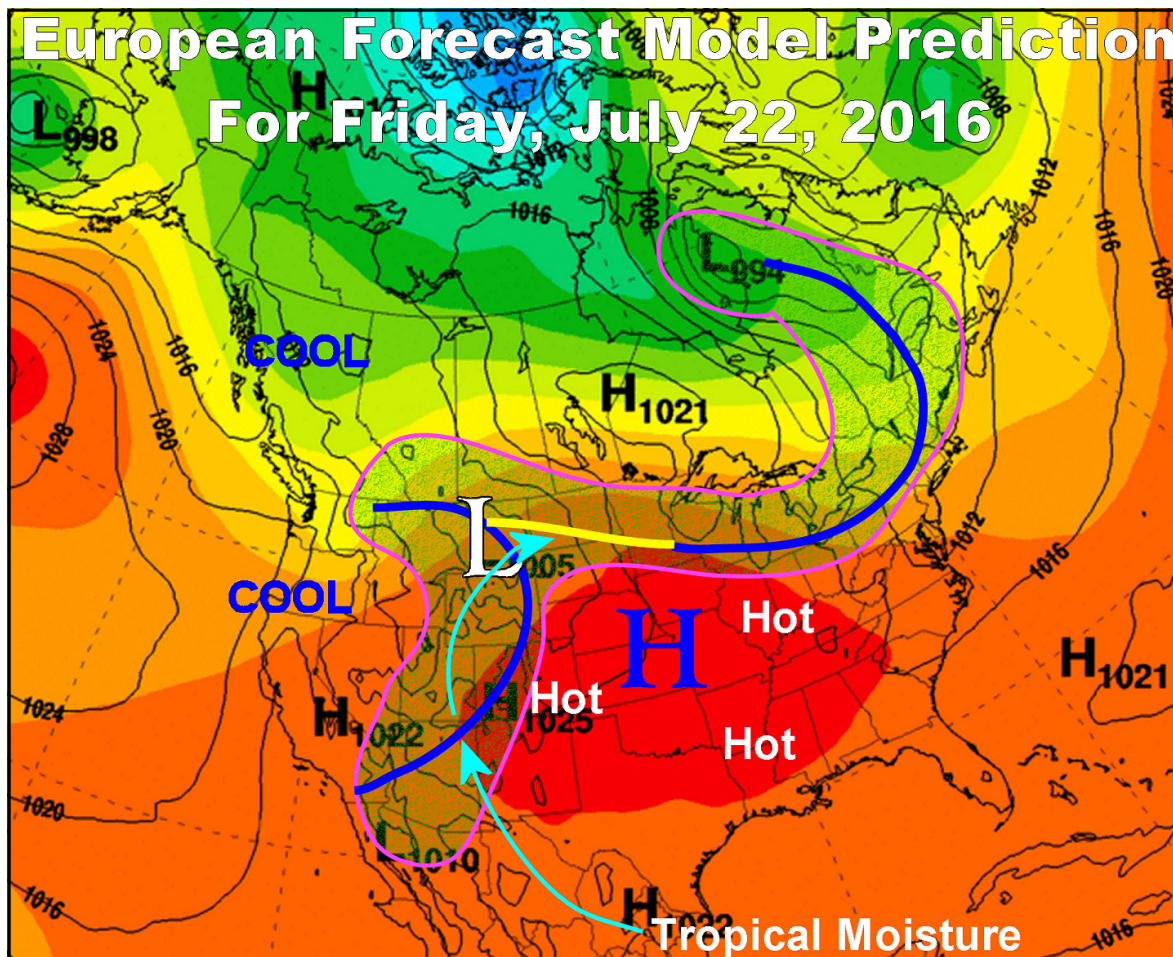
What are ruffles, you ask? In addition to this play on words from the Frito-Lay’s slogan “Ruffles Have Ridges”, it is a very good word describing activity in our atmosphere, our trading floors and in the minds of most individuals and companies involved with agriculture in the United States today. By definition a ruffle, when used as a verb, means to destroy the smoothness or evenness of something or to disturb, vex or irritate. As a noun, the word “ruffle” is a break in the smoothness or evenness of some surface or again a disturbance, annoyance or irritation. These words perfectly describe what the recent advertised ridge of high pressure for the U.S. Midwest has done to the peacefulness of the daily agricultural commodity trade. They also adequately describe the torment in many traders, forecasters and farmers minds when it comes to dealing with a forecast of a summer time high pressure ridge over the heart of the Midwest. In addition to these features the “ruffles” are also in the atmosphere, represented by the many disturbances that will rotate around our ridge of high pressure that will dominate weather for the next ten days and perhaps longer.

Tranquility was driving the market place and general attitudes during the spring and early summer. Everyone was content believing a drought was coming to the U.S. in 2016 and all they had to do was to sit back and count the money. However, just before the

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Independence Day Holiday rain began falling more abundantly in the Midwest and most key crop areas received sufficient amounts to eliminate most signs of dryness. The wet weather culminated during the Independence Day holiday weekend with substantial rain in the lower Midwest where dryness was just beginning to seriously hurt summer crops. Rain that weekend and during the following week sent the market place in a nose dive breaking the hearts of most drought mongers and forcing many millionaires in the making to fall well short of their dreams.

Alas, the dreams of faltering summer weather have arrived. Computer forecast models began advertising the dreaded high pressure ridge that so many were counting on for summer pocket money just shortly before mid-month and today we find that ridge in place and impacting the Midwest by inducing some significant drying and warming tendencies. How long will it last and can we count in it to bring the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow? The answer is in the “ruffles”. Not everyone wants higher prices. Many food companies loath the thought of rising prices because of smaller crops and ultimately the consumer does, as well, although they do not know the efforts that are made on their behalf in trying to keep product prices low.



In this case the ruffles to our high pressure ridge will be atmospheric disturbances that will move across North America over the next few weeks Their job will be to “irritate” the high pressure ridge and traders by constantly eroding the top of the ridge away and

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allowing rain to fall periodically across the northern Plains and into the northern and eastern Midwest. World Weather, Inc. is of the opinion that this ridge will have some staying power for a while and that may lead to greatly reduced soil moisture in the next two weeks and rising crop stress.

The most blaring voice of weather trends of the past states very clearly that the odds of a ridge prevailing through the entire balance of summer without a break is low. Looking back at our analog years of 1980, 1998 and 1963 we notice that in all three years the jet stream was active, as it is today. So active, in fact, that cooler that has tended to dam up in western Canada during these summers eventually undercuts the high pressure ridge bringing short term bouts of rain and periodic cooling tendencies to parts of the northern Plains and Midwest. World Weather, Inc. sees no reason to expect this summer's weather to behave contrary to these past trends. However, we must take into consideration recent past weather and its presentation of frequent rainfall.

Rhythm in the atmosphere suggests the atmosphere has exhausted itself of rain for a while and that a break in the wetter biased pattern must now prevail for a while. For that reason we believe the current ridge of high pressure will probably continue to dominate the Midwest for at least ten days, although it will move around during that period of time leaving some dryness and warmth for everyone to enjoy from time to time. A little later this summer, most likely in August, the pattern will break once again and some timely rain will fall across the region bringing with it more seasonable temperatures for a while.

Our Trend Model for the summer suggests these oscillations of warm to hot weather and limited rainfall with periods of milder conditions and "some" rainfall may prevail into September. The odds are high that today's abundant soil moisture will not be present again for a while – at least not in a general manner. So, does that mean we are going to have drought and serious cuts in production?

The odds are low for wall to wall drought of serious intensity across the Midwest in the next six weeks. However, the region will dry down enough that some areas will suffer crop stress and some production decline. The problems are most likely in the U.S. Delta, the central and southern Plains and west-central and southwestern Corn Belt. Other areas will experience some drier and warmer biased periods, but they will not be nearly as persistent.

Recent past drier years in the United States have proven multiple times that our crop genetics have advanced so well that it takes some very extreme conditions to seriously pull down production. Heat and dryness have to be at extremes for a lengthy period of time to induce the disastrous years like 2012, 1988, the 1950s and 1930s. World Weather, Inc. does not believe weather conditions will become that extreme in 2016. Enough stress will occur in parts of the nation to shorten late season production a bit, but early season corn will largely escape the most damaging part of the heat and dryness.

Remember that soybeans are the "smarter" of the two crops and will shut down development for a while when conditions become extreme. Shutting down can only last for a little while before permanent damage sets in, but a timely rain of significance during the period of crop shutdown can revive crops and induce a notable spurt of improved development helping to reduce some of the moisture stress impact on production.

The bottom line is that our summer ridge of high pressure will have many ruffles over the next several weeks and an extremely close watch on the daily weather developments will be necessary to stay on top of any weather-induced damage potential.

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